



City of Helena

CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY

Wednesday, September 2, 2015



City Members

- ☒ Pat Doyle
- ☐ ~~Melissa Lewis, **absent**~~
- ☒ Ross Johnson

County Members

- ☒ Jane Kollmeyer
- ☒ Dave Payne
- ☒ Nyle Hawson (Lincoln Parks Board)

Joint Member

- ☒ John Carter, School District Representative

Commission Representatives

- ☐ ~~Andres Haladay, City Commissioner, **absent**~~
- ☒ Susan Good Geise, County Commissioner

Staff Contact

- ☒ Matt Heimel, Lewis and Clark County Special Districts Planner
- ☒ Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- ☒ Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
- ☒ Jennifer Schade, Recorder

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 426

TIME: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Visitor(s): Julie Baughman, Kyle Brine, Eric Bryson, Hannah Curtis, Scott Ferguson, Jason Grimmis, Kevin Harrington, Andy Hunthausen, Wayne Jeter, Jennifer Kaisen, Lindsay Morgan, Mike Murray, Heidi O'Brien, David Smith, Kim Smith, Matt Varney

1. Call to Order/Establish Quorum/Introductions

Vice Chairman Pat Doyle called the City-County Parks Advisory Board Meeting to order at 11:28 am. A quorum was present.

2. Consent Action Items

Approval of minutes: August 15, 2015

- After review of the minutes, Nyle moved to approve the August 15, 2015 minutes as presented. John seconded. Motion carried.

3. Comments from Persons Present

The board will accept brief comments from the public for items that are not on the agenda at this time.

- Community member David Smith, CEO of the YMCA spoke on Centennial Park concerns. While he feels Centennial Park is a great facility for the community, there has been

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extensive damage to the park that he feels needs addressed (photo handout was distributed). Each morning, he witnesses city employees cleaning up garbage. Other issues include: drug deals in front of the Skate Park, empty alcohol containers, drug paraphernalia on the property, extensive graffiti, assaults by transients, and fighting. David stated we need to rise up and say this is unacceptable. This affects tourism and YMCA business. He met a mother in the parking lot and she was concerned about dropping her child off for soccer practice. Amy added that the vandalism has escalated beyond the parking lot. In touring the park, graffiti was discovered in the playground. There has also been extensive damage to signs and driving in the fields.

- Jennifer Keiser from the Budget Inn asked to speak. Because of where her business is located, she has had many issues with transients. Visitors who use Women's Park to walk their animals are being assaulted. She presented the committee with littered citations for open containers. She has witnessed nudity, fornication and defecation. She herself has been assaulted.
- Amy stated that there was a meeting held last week (8.28.2015) with representatives from the community and the Helena Police Department – this is not the first conversation regarding these issues. Police can't do anything unless they see a crime being committed. It is difficult to cite offenders with some of the ordinances currently have in place. If arrested, we really don't have anywhere to take the offender. We have no enforcement authority. Amy then directed the committee to a City Park Code handout. We need to review this and begin focusing future discussions on our current city ordinances.
- Susan Good Geise made a recommendation that we include this item on our next agenda for thorough discussion. She also recommended that we invite the following people to this meeting: members of the public, Chief McGee, other members of the police department. The agenda item will be called "Park Safety". The discussion needs to include all parks.

ACTION ITEM: The City-County Parks Board will hold extensive discussion regarding "Park Safety" at the next meeting. We will extend a formal invitation to Chief McGee and other members of the police department.

- Jane asked if we could do research on what is happening in other communities. Amy stated as with everywhere else, the main focus is on adequate enforcement. This seems to be a trend. When we move the offenders from one area, they move to another.
- John stated he believed we placed a camera at the band shell. Did that change behaviors? The police department has been monitoring the camera system. There have been some glitches but it does provide us with some protection.
- The School District campuses do have dusk to dawn curfews unless there is an authorized activity.
- Stacy suggested we research the sonic youth device known as the "Mosquito". This device works by emitting an alternating high-frequency tone four times a second which isn't audible to people over about 25 years of age, but is intensely irritating to people under that age. Amy will research these types of deterrents.

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4. Presentations

Public Safety Initiative Update – Presenter(s): County Commissioners

- Jason Grimmis was the first presenter on this project. The Lewis and Clark County Detention Center opened in 1985 housing 54 beds. At our existing facility, we have 80 beds (some of which are temporary and substandard). As of yesterday, we have 91 inmates with 131 in care. The remaining inmates are sent to neighboring counties. Our facilities are extremely overcrowded. Because of this, we have been unable to do any type of programming such as AA, assistance with obtaining a GED, opportunity to meet with an attorney, etc. 50 – 70% of the inmates have mental health issues. We cannot sustain certain situations where we are currently located at. The National Institute of Corrections did an evaluation of the facility and confirmed it is inadequate.
- A citizen advisory committee has studied concerns/issues. Based on the current issues, the committee is recommending focus on the following:
 - Intervention
 - Prevention
 - Addressing mental health issues
 - Providing better programming
 - Providing pretrial services
- The proposed design of 109,000 square footage would house 208 functional bed capacity as well as administration offices and special needs housing for both health and mental health use and segregation of inmates. The property is 40 acres by Super One Foods. The projected cost is 41 million dollars. Staff increases will double the current staff (35 to 65).
- Eric Bryson, Chief Administrative Officer with Lewis and Clark County presented next. In 2010 – 2011 it was determined by sheriff and commissions that a new building was needed. They recommended a 30 year solution which includes the ability to expand.
 - Expansion would include:
 - Additional pretrial services - at initial appearance, judge would receive information on the incarcerated person to include community ties, work situation, living situation, etc.
 - There are currently over 800 felons out in the community. We need to address court security, interventions, and mental health issues.
 - We need more probation officers, more programming.
- Jason Grimes, Jail Captain presented. We are at a critical juncture. Those living in our facility are considered innocent until proven guilty. We are maximizing every area and still are not meeting standards. One pod which houses females has had up to 22 females. Other pods are equally full. They include 32 different classifications. We cannot continue to do this.
- Scott Ferguson was the next presenter. Scott has been on the job for 18 years. While he appreciates everything everyone does, staffing is extremely difficult in a facility that has to be staff 24/7. This new facility will allow for additional staffing.
- Susan Good Geise discussed like issues/concerns in the county facility. There are 91 people in the county facility – 80 are felons. People incarcerated don't have money so they have to stay in jail. Once we incarcerate someone, we are 100% responsible for

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them – we are responsible for their medical needs, housing, feeding, and providing safety. Statistics prove that with the vast majority of people, if they don't get out within three days, they will be there for a very a long time. Per Mike – we currently have inmates in Jefferson, Cascade, and Broadwater Counties. All of these jails contacted us in August and stated that they are full.

- Per Jane – what will be done with the current facility?
 - We will turn this into a courthouse annex. Helena PD will take over all of it. There is also discussion of getting another Justice of the Peace. Rooms will become more court rooms. The current proposal did not include money to renovate the current space.
 - Kevin – how are we educating the community about this levy? Per Mike – we are sending out mailers and attending as many public meetings as possible. There will be an open forum on October 14th at Helena College which is sponsored by the IR. This group will talk to anyone who will listen. If someone is affiliated with another group, please consider contacting the representatives today to set up a date/time to meet.
 - Pat encouraged everyone visit the county website, public safety initiative for more information.

5. Discussion Items

- None

6. Action Items

Consider a proposal from Larry Kim Smith for cash in-lieu of parkland dedication and make a recommendation to the County Commissioners on the requirements for parkland dedication for the proposed Garden Valley Subdivision. Staff presentation by Lindsay Morgan, Planner II.

- Matt Heimel began this presentation. The proposed subdivision will contain 37 single-family residential lots (provided preliminary plat). This subdivision is located west of and adjacent to North Montana Avenue and south of the adjacent to John G. Mine road (see attached). Based on the market analysis completed by Atlas Real Estate, the per acre market value of the property is \$2.595. Matt is requesting a motion to accept or deny.
- Per Jane – in reviewing recent appraisals she has concerns that the market values seem to be all over the map. Will the appraisal be completed before the completion of the subdivision or after? Matt stated that per the market analysis, there will be an extensive appraisal **before** completion.
- John moved to accept payment in lieu of parkland dedication. Motion carried.

7. Reports

Amy Teegarden - City

- Parks and Rec has had a very busy summer. The biggest concerns/issues have been with Centennial Park.
- Amy announced that Liz has resigned. The pool season was very successful – attendance was up. She will have a final report available at the October meeting.
- Kay's Kids program was successful. There were not many attendees at Lincoln Park so we opted to close this program site.

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- The Sixth Ward Park project is coming along. Amy and Jennifer visited the site – had conservation team working. The playground should be ready in the fall and planting will begin this spring.
- The Peanut Park Playground project is completed.

Matt Heimerl - County

- No updates

Jane Kollmeyer - HOLMAC

- There was an article in the IR regarding a new app for our trails. There have been new additions to trail system. Connector on Mount Ascension and the Andy Trail. We will continue adding signage.
- Several community members have submitted an application to receive a grant. Will use the money to encourage healthy living. The goal is to direct people driving on the interstate to trail heads and parks. There has been a stumbling stone with MTD as they are requesting to see a comprehensive plan.

Nyle Howsman – Lincoln Parks Road

- Parks activity is slowing down. Increased revenues due to fee structure.

Susan Good Geise, County Commissioner

- Dan Pocha with the Native American Center contacted Susan regarding our new tobacco-free signage in the parks. He believes we are violating constitutional rights and religion in placing those signs in our public parks. Per Amy – while she understands the program about tobacco use for Native American rituals, she does not believe we are violating anyone's constitutional rights. Amy then recommended we invite Karen Lane with the County Health Department to our next meeting to discuss this issue. Jane added that we are not arresting people for breaking this policy – it is simply a guidance tool. Instead of changing language to the signs, perhaps we can look at making an amendment to the current policy.

ACTION ITEM: **Amy will extend an invitation to Karen Lane with the County Health Department to present at our next meeting on the tobacco-free signage issue.**

Craig Marr – Parks

- The Parks Department is finalizing summer projects. We are interviewing two new maintenance workers. The seasonal staff is gone.
- The pool has been drained and the department will paint the lazy river this fall.
- We have had some issues at Centennial which has prevented us from doing necessary work. There have been issues with littering, damage done to ball fields, and graffiti done to playground equipment. Craig is recommending that we look at updating our ordinances to make them more easily enforceable. Community member Kyle Brine asked if the new trash receptacle clearly marked/labeled to make it more obvious. Craig stated that it should be clear – the offenders just don't care.

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- We have also had some issues with transients at the band shell in Women's Park. The band shell will be pulled for the winter.

Dave Payne – Fair Board

- The stampede was very successful. We had high attendance at both the carnival and the rodeo. The foundation has some concerns that 4-H participation is on the decline.
- We are looking for ways to increase the membership of Friends of the Fairgrounds. There is information online, but we aren't seeing an increase. Dave asked that we please send ideas.
- Per Susan – we need to better get message across of our fairgrounds. There are many activities that can take place there. There is an annual church group convention that comes in and the economic impact of the fairgrounds is enormous.

John Carter – School District

- Schools are now in session. We are using Sierra Park for football and soccer. We are also looking at long-term capital investment as this would be very beneficial. John reported the same issues at the schools as at the parks – dumpsters aren't being used as well. With all focus on recycling awareness, you would think this would not be an issue. Pat then asked if we are tracking how much is being spent on clean up. This is something we need to do.
- Stacy stated she is working with parents and the PTO regarding the cleanup of the playground areas at the schools.

Other

- Amy mentioned that in July, the City-County Health Board awarded the City Parks Department the Gold Buoy Award for safety. Kudos to the park maintenance staff for making this happen!
- There has been discussion regarding Front Street as it relates to the Helena downtown master plan. This will be addressed as well as walking mall. This is more a public works issue but we will you keep posted.

Adjournment: The City-County Parks Board meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.

8. Communications and Future Agenda Items (Board Members)

- **“Public Safety” – Future Agenda Item**

9. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2015

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